Marriage reaffirmed at the polls

Voters in Austin, Texas, had the good sense Saturday to repeal overwhelmingly a city policy that had extended employee benefits to live-in lovers. The vote — 62 percent favored repeal — rescinded a rule adopted last fall by Austin's city council granting health-insurance coverage to 98 unmarried companions of municipal workers.

Such policies (now in force in about 20 cities nationwide) officially equate unmarried couples, homosexual and heterosexual, with married ones.

That's an affront to many people. While private employers are of course free to cover whom they wish, taxpayers shouldn't be forced to pick up the tab.

And marriage, even now in its most turbulent era, is still at least theoretically a guarantee of a long-term union that myriad other social, economic and legal institutions have come to bank on. To be sure, holy matrimony reflects broad-based religious values, but it also recognizes assorted workaday realities — it helps establish parentage, designate property, provide for inheritance and declare one's tax status.

It's only reasonable that benefits granted to employees' families should define "family" in its traditional sense. Not only is a legal union between man and woman a practical basis for conferring, say, health coverage, but consider the potential for abuse in letting any "domestic partner" benefit. (Hence the folly in our own University of Colorado at Boulder recently deciding to grant such privileges to any partners of students.)

Some homosexual-rights activists saw "gay bashing" in the Austin vote — an unlikely motive in that reputedly liberal college community. More likely, taxpayers of every political stripe as well as married and single didn't see why they should subsidize people's romantic dalliances. As one voter told the New York Times, "Let them pay for it or else let them get married."

cademy boulevards. Call 380-1124 for

ter slates meeting: The Business
er is inviting past, present and future
o an organizational meeting from 7 to
in the BAC's new coffee house, 513
e., Manitou Springs. Call 685-1861 for

rhood group to meet: The Sunset
orhood Association will meet at 7

Nature Center, 245 Bear Creek Road. Topics of discussion will include review and discussion of the preliminary master plan for Fountain Creek Regional Park's developed area and of the possible use of Bear Creek Regional Park land for school purposes. Call 520-6375 for information.

Family Night Out slated: A Family Night Out — including a chili dinner, a movie, games, swimming, weights, basketball and more for 50 cents — will be held from 7 to 9:30 p.m. Friday at the YMCA/USO, 207 N. Nevada Ave. No reservations are needed. Call 471-9790 for information.

RANCES JOHNSON, 78, a home-
May 6, 1994, at her home in Castle

ral will be held at 10 a.m. Wednesday
ck Baptist Church, 221 Perry St., Cas-
rial will be at 2 p.m. Wednesday at
Park Cemetery, Woodland Park.
nson was born May 17, 1915, in Colo-
s to Hollie Clifton Randol Sr. and Min-
(Woods) Randol.
married in the early 1960s in West
lif., to Ernest Johnson, who is

MARGARET LORRAINE (EVERMAN) RISSER, 77, a retired bookkeeper for the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce, died May 8, 1994, in Colorado Springs.

The funeral will be held at 10 a.m. Wednesday at Swan-Law Cascade Chapel, 501 N. Cascade Ave., with Pastor Stan Sack officiating. Swan-Law Funeral Home is handling arrangements.

Mrs. Risser was born Nov. 6, 1916, in Williamsburg, Kan., to John Milton and Ethel Freida (Reed) Everman.

She was married Nov. 1, 1935, in Eads to A. Frank Risser III, who is deceased.